

## Message Text

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64

ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 SCS-03

SCA-01 SCCT-01 FBIE-00 SY-05 AID-05 PC-01 /072 W

----- 012442

R 211833Z JUL 75

FM AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 668

INFO AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR

AMEMBASSY BOGOTA

USCINCSO

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE TEGUCIGALPA 3112

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, HO

SUBJECT: REACTIONS TO DISCOVERY OF BODIES IN OLANCHO

REF: TEGUCIGALPA 3085

BEGIN SUMMARY. THE CHURCH ISSUED A DECLARATION THAT DEPLORED THE DEATHS IN OLANCHO, EXCOMMUNICATED THOSE IMPLICATED IN THE DEATHS AND DEMANDED THAT THE GUILTY BE PUNISHED. NEWSPAPER AND RADIO REACTION HAS BEEN VERY HEAVY WITH ITS MAJOR THRUST BEING A CONDEMNATION OF THE MASSACRE AND A DEMAND THAT THE GUILTY BE BROUGHT TO JUSTICE. THE GOVERNMENT IS NOW FACED WITH THE DIFFICULT PROBLEM OF HOW TO DEAL WITH THOSE GUILTY OF THE OLANCHO MASSACRE. IN A VERY REAL SENSE THE GOVERNMENT'S PRESTIGE AND THE HONOR OF THE ARMED FORCES ARE INVOLVED IN RESOLVING THE SITUATION. END SUMMARY.

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1. THE HONDURAN CHURCH ISSUED A DECLARATION AFTER THE GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCED THE DISCOVERY OF BODIES IN OLANCHO. THE MAIN POINTS FOLLOW:

(A) DEPLORES THE DEATHS AND THE SITUATION OF

VIOLENCE AND INJUSTICE WHICH LED TO THAT EXTREME;  
(B) THE CHURCH EXTENDS ITS DEEPEST SYMPATHY TO THE  
FAMILIES AND FRIENDS OF THE DECEASED;  
(C) THOSE IMPLICATED DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY IN THE  
INJURY OR KILLING PRIESTS OR CHURCH PERSONNEL ARE  
HEREBY EXCOMMUNICATED;  
(D) CHURCH BELLS SHOULD TOLL ON JULY 19 AS A  
SIGN OF MOURNING AND CEREMONIES SHOULD BE CONDUCTED  
IN ALL CHURCHES ON JULY 20; AND  
(E) THE CHURCH AWAITS THE REPORT OF THE HIGH LEVEL  
MILITARY COMMISSION THAT WILL ASCERTAIN WHO ARE  
GUILTY OF THE CRIMES.

2. THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE DISCOVERY OF THE BODIES  
WAS SOON FOLLOWED BY A SPATE OF EDITORIALS AND  
RADIO COMMENTARIES. THE THRUST OF ALL OF THESE  
WAS A CONDEMNATION OF THE MASSACRE AND A DEMAND THAT THE  
GUILTY BE BROUGHT TO JUSTICE. ANOTHER STRONG ELEMENT  
IN THE EDITORIALS QUESTIONED WHETHER HONDURAS IS  
DOOMED TO BE THE TARGET OF MORE HUMAN AND NATURAL  
DISASTERS AFTER HURRICANE FIFI, A CHANGE OF  
GOVERNMENT, THE UNITED BRANDS SCANDAL AND THE  
MASSACRE IN OLANCHO.

3. THE BODIES OF FATHER IVAN BETANCOURT AND  
MARIA ELENA BOLIVAR AFTER BEING RECEIVED BY THE  
COLUMBIAN AMBASSADOR WERE FLOWN TO COLUMBIA. FATHER  
CASIMIRO, A U.S. CITIZEN NAMED MICHAEL JEROME CYPHER,  
IN ACCORDANCE WITH HIS WISHES WAS BURIED IN HIS  
PARRISH IN OLANCHO. RUTH ARGENTINA GARCIA, A  
UNIVERSITY STUDENT, WAS BURIED IN TEGUCIGALPA AFTER  
LYING IN STATE IN THE UNIVERSITY. THE OTHERS,  
MAINLY CAMPESINOS, WERE BURIED IN THEIR HOME VILLAGES OR  
TOWNS. THE TOTAL KILLED IN THE ASSAULT ON THE  
CENTRO 18 DE FEBRERO IN JUTICALPA AND SUB-  
SEQUENTLY REACHED AN OFFICIAL TOLL OF 14. HOWEVER,  
MANY CHURCH OFFICIALS, STUDENTS AND CAMPESINOS  
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BELIEVE THE ACTUAL NUMBER OF DEATHS WAS SUBSTANTIALLY  
HIGHER.

4. COMMENT: THE GOVERNMENT IS FACED WITH THE DIFFI-  
CULT PROBLEM OF HOW TO DEAL WITH THOSE GUILTY OF THE  
OLANCHO ATROCITIES. THE HIGH LEVEL MILITARY  
COMMISSION HAS RETURNED FROM OLANCHO AND WILL  
PROBABLY RELEASE ITS REPORT IN THE NEAR FUTURE.  
PRESUMABLY IT WILL IMPLICATE BOTH LANDOWNERS AND  
MILITARY PERSONNEL IN THE DEATHS. THE CASES,  
IF THE CONSTITUTION IS FOLLOWED, WOULD THEN HAVE  
TO BE TRIED IN THE CIVIL COURT SYSTEM. ALMOST ALL

SECTORS OF SOCIETY WILLHOLD THE GOVERNMENT RESPONSIBLE  
FOR SEEING THAT JUSTICE IS METED OUT. IN A VERY  
REAL SENSE THE GOVERNMENT'S PRESTIGE AND THE HONOR  
OF THE ARMED FORCES ARE INVOLVED IN A SATISFACTORY  
RESOLUTION OF THE PRESENT SITUATION.  
SANCHEZ

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## Message Attributes

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MANAGUA  
SAN JOSE  
SAN SALVADOR  
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